

Nothing in the World Without Its Use

By H. POLANO

(From *Selections from the Talmud*)

DAVID, King of Israel, was once lying upon his couch, and many thoughts were passing through his mind.

"Of what use in this world is the spider?" thought he; "it but increases the dust and dirt of the world, making places unsightly and causing great annoyance."

Then he thought of an insane man:

"How unfortunate is such a being! I know that all things are ordained by God with reason and purpose, yet this is beyond my comprehension; why should men be born idiots, or grow insane?"

Then the mosquitoes annoyed him, and the

king thought, "What can the mosquito be good for? why was it created in the world? It but disturbs our comfort, and the world profits not by its existence."

Yet King David lived to discover that these very insects, and the very condition of life the being of which he deplored, were ordained even to his own benefit.

When he fled from before Saul, David was captured in the land of the Philistines by the brothers of Goliath, who carried him before the king of Gath, and it was only by pretending idiocy that he escaped death, the king deeming it impossible that such a man could be the kingly David.

Upon another occasion David hid himself in the cave of Adullam, and after he had entered the cave it chanced that a spider spun a web over the opening thereof. His pursuers passed that way, but thinking that no one could have entered

the cave protected by the spider's web without destroying it, they continued on their way.

The mosquito also was of service to David, when he entered the camp of Saul to secure the latter's weapon. While he stooped near Abner, the sleeping man moved and placed his leg upon David's body. If he moved, he would awake Abner and meet death; if he remained in that position, morning would dawn and bring him to death; he knew not what to do, when a mosquito alighted upon Abner's leg; he moved it quickly, and David escaped.

Therefore sang David:

“ All my bones shall say, O Lord, who is like unto Thee.”

David's Search For His Companion In Paradise

By S. BARING-GOULD

(From *Legends of the Patriarchs and Prophets*)

DAVID thanked God that He had given him such a wise son as Solomon, and now he desired but one thing further of God, and that was to see him who was to be his companion in Paradise; for to every man is allotted by God one man to be his friend and comrade in the Land of Bliss.

So David prayed to God, and his prayer was heard, and a voice fell from heaven and bade him to confer the kingdom upon his son Solomon, and then to go forth, and the Lord would lead him to the place where his companion dwelt.

David therefore had his son Solomon crowned king, and then he went forth out of Jerusalem,

and he was in pilgrim's garb, with a staff in his hand; and he went from city to city, and from village to village, but he found not the man whom he sought. One day, after the lapse of many weeks, he drew near to a village upon the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, and alongside of him walked a poorly dressed man laden with a bundle of fagots. This man was very old and reverend of aspect, and David watched him. He saw him dispose of his wood, and then give half the money he had obtained by the sale of it to a poor person. After that he bought a piece of bread and retired from the town. As he went, there passed a blind woman, and the old man broke his bread in half, and gave one portion to the woman; and he continued his course till he reached the mountains from which he had brought his load in the morning.

David thought, "This man well deserves to be my companion for eternity, for he is pious, char-

itable, and reverend of aspect; I must ask his name."

He went after the old man, and he found him in a cave among the rocks, which was lighted by a rent above. David stood without and heard the hermit pray, and read the Tora and the Psalms, till the sun went down. Then he lighted a lamp and began his evening prayers; and when they were finished, he drew forth the piece of bread, and ate the half of it.

David, who had not ventured to interrupt the devotions of the old hermit, now entered the cave and saluted him.

The hermit asked, "Who art thou? I have seen no man here before, save only Mata, son of Johanna, the companion destined to King David in Paradise."

David told his name, and asked after this Mata. But the aged man could give him no information of his whereabouts. "But," said he,

"go over these mountains, and observe well what thou lightest upon, and it may be thou wilt find Mata."

David thanked him, and continued his search. For long it was profitless. He traversed the stony dales and the barren mountains, and saw no trace of human foot. At last, just as hope was abandoning him, on the summit of a rugged peak he saw a wet spot. Then he stood still in surprise. "How comes there to be a patch of soft and sloppy ground here?" he asked; "the top-most peak of a stony mountain is not the place where springs bubble up."

As he thus mused, an aged man came up the other side of the mountain. His eyes were depressed to the earth, so that he saw not David. And when he came to the wet patch, he stood still, and prayed with such fervor that rivulets of tears flowed out of his eyes, and sank into the soil; and thus David learned how it was that the mountain top was wet.

Then David thought, "Surely this man, whose eyes are such copious fountains of tears, must be my companion in Paradise."

Yet he ventured not to interrupt him in his prayer, till he heard him ask, "O my God! pardon King David his sins, and save him from further trespass! for my sake be merciful to him, for Thou hast destined him to be my comrade for all eternity!"

Then David ran towards him, but the old man tottered and fell, and before the king reached him he was dead.

So David dug into the ground which had been moistened by the tears of Mata, and laid him there, and said the funeral prayers over him, and covered him with the earth, and then returned to Jerusalem.

And when he came into his harem, the Angel of Death stood there and greeted him with the words, "God has heard thy supplications; now has thy life reached its end."

Then David said, "The Lord's will be done!" and he fell down upon the ground, and expired.

Gabriel descended to comfort Solomon, and to give him a heavenly shroud in which to wrap David. And all Israel followed the bier to Machpelah, where Solomon laid him by the side of Abraham and Joseph.

How Solomon Obtained Power

BY S. BARING-GOULD

(From *Legends of the Patriarchs and Prophets*)

AFTER Solomon had executed the last offices for his father, he rested in a dale between Hebron and Jerusalem, and fell asleep. As he returned to himself, there stood before him eight angels, each with countless wings, diverse in kinds and colors; and the angels bowed themselves before him three times.

"Who are ye?" asked Solomon, with eyes still closed.

"We are the angels ruling over the eight winds of heaven," was their reply. "God hath sent us to give thee dominion over ourselves and over the winds subject to us. They will storm and bluster, or breathe softly, at thy pleasure. At

thy command they will swoop down on earth, and bear thee over the highest mountains."

The greatest of the angels gave him a jewel inscribed with "God is Power and Greatness," and said, "When thou hast a command for us, then raise this stone towards heaven, and we shall appear before thee as thy servants."

When these angels had taken their departure, there appeared four more, of whom each was unlike the other. One was in fashion as a great whale, another as an eagle, the third as a lion, and the fourth as a serpent. And they said, "We are they who rule over all the creatures that move in the earth, and air, and water; and God hath sent us to give thee dominion over all creatures, that they may serve thee and thy friends with all good, and fight against thine enemies with all their force."

The angel who ruled over the winged fowls extended to Solomon a precious stone, with the

inscription, "Let all creatures praise the Lord!" and said, "By virtue of this stone, raised above thy head, canst thou call us to thy assistance, and to fulfil thy desire."

Solomon immediately ordered the angels to bring before him a pair of every living creature that moves in the water, flies in the air, and walks or glides or creeps on the earth.

The angels vanished, and in an instant they were with Solomon once more, and there were assembled in his sight pairs of every creature, from the elephant to the smallest fly.

Solomon conversed with the angels, and was instructed by them in the habits, virtues, and names of all living creatures; he listened to the complaints of the beasts, birds, and fishes, and by his wisdom he rectified many evil customs among them.

He entertained himself longest with the birds, both on account of their beautiful speech, which

he understood, and also because of the wise sentences which they uttered.

This is the signification of the cry of the peacock: "With what measure thou judgest others, thou shalt thyself be judged."

This is the song of the nightingale: "Contentment is the greatest happiness."

The turtle-dove calls: "Better were it for some created things that they had never been created."

The pewit pipes: "He that hath no mercy, will not find mercy himself."

The bird syrdar cries: "Turn to the Lord, ye sinners."

The swallow screams: "Do good, and ye shall receive a reward."

This is the pelican's note: "Praise the Lord in heaven and earth."

The dove chants: "The fashion of this world passeth away, but God remaineth eternal."

The kata says: "Silence is the best safeguard."

The cry of the eagle is: "However long life may be, yet its inevitable term is death."

The croak of the raven is: "The further from man, the happier I."

The cock crows before the dawn and in the day: "Remember thy Creator, O thoughtless man."

Solomon chose the cock and the pewit to be his constant companions—the first because of its cry, and the second, because it can see through earth as through glass, and could therefore tell him where fountains of water were to be found.

After he had stroked the dove, he bade her dwell with her young in the Temple he was about to build to the honor of the Most High. This pair of doves, in a few years, multiplied to such an extent that all who sought the Temple moved

through the quarter of the town it occupied under the shadow of the wings of doves.

When Solomon was again alone, an angel appeared to him, whose upper half was like to earth, and whose lower half was like to water. He bowed himself before the king, and said, "I am created by God to do His will on the dry land and in the watery sea. Now, God has sent me to serve thee, and thou canst rule over earth and water. At thy command the highest mountains will be made plain, and the level land will rise into steep heights. Rivers and seas will dry up, and the desert will stream with water at thy command." Then he gave to him a precious stone, with the legend engraved thereon, "Heaven and earth serve God."

The Vision of Solomon

BY WILLIAM WHITEHEAD

TWAS night, and sleep with gentle-waving
wand

Sat softly brooding o'er that monarch's brow,
Whose waking nod could Judah's realms com-
mand,

Or deal destruction to the frightened foe,
Great David's son—but at this tranquil hour
No dreams of state disturbed his peaceful bed;
To nobler heights his thoughts unfetter'd soar,
And brighter visions hover round his head:
Let meaner kings by mortals guard their state,
Around his sacred couch aërial legates wait.

“Hail, best belov'd! superior to the rest,”
One bending angel cried with heavenly voice,
“Earth, seas, and air, stand to thy view confess'd,
And God's own mandate ratifies thy choice.

Choose then from these—say, shall thy pow'r
extend

Where suns scarce warm this earth's remotest
shore,

Shall India's lords beneath thy sceptre bend,
Whilst their black troops stand silent and
adore?

To thee, sole lord, shall earth her stores unfold,
Pour all her gems to thee, and mines that flame
with gold?

Shall ocean's waves, obedient to thy call,
As erst to Moses, rang'd in order stand;
Whilst crowds once more admire the floating
wall,

And treasures open on the glittering sand?
Or shall Fame's breath inspire each softer air,
Thee just and good, to distant worlds resound,
Whilst Peace, fair goddess, leads the smiling year,
Swells the glad grain, and spreads the harvest
round,

Bids Jordan's stream extend its azure pride,
Pleas'd with reflected fruits that tremble in the
tide?"

The cherub spoke when Power majestic rose ;
A Tyrian-tinctur'd robe she dragg'd behind,
Whose artful folds at every turn disclose
Sceptres and crowns that flutter'd in the wind.
Gigantic phantom ! in her face appear'd
Terrific charms, too fierce for mortal eyes.
Aw'd and amaz'd her very smiles we fear'd,
As though storms lurk'd beneath the smooth
disguise ;
But when she frowns, tremendous thunders roar,
Stern desolation reigns, and kingdoms float in
gore.

Her, Wealth succeeds, and scarce his tottering
head
Sustains the glittering ore's incumbent weight ;

O'er his old limbs were tatter'd garments spread;
A well-fix'd staff directs his feeble feet.
Thus mean himself appear'd; but all around
What crowds unnumber'd hail the passing seer!
Power, as he came, bow'd lowly to the ground,
And own'd with reverence a superior there.
"Rise, David's son, thy utmost wish extend,
See to thy sceptre Wealth, the world's great monarch, bend."

Fame next approach'd, whose clarion's martial sound
Bids conqu'ring laurels flourish ever green;
And gentle Peace with olive chaplets crown'd,
And Plenty, goddess of the sylvan scene.
These Pleasure join'd; loose flow'd her radiant hair;
Her flying fingers touch'd the trembling lyre.
"Come, Mirth," she sung, "your blooming wreaths prepare;

Come, gay Delight, and ever young Desire :
Let days, let years in downy circles move,
Sacred to sprightly Joy, and all-subduing Love."

The mingled train advanc'd ; to close the rear,
As lost in thought, appear'd a pensive maid ;
Bright was her aspect, lovely, yet severe,
In virgin white her decent limbs array'd :
She moved in sober state ; on either side
A beauteous handmaid friendly aid bestow'd :
Fair Virtue here, her view from earth to guide,
There Contemplation rais'd her golden rod.
Hail, Wisdom, hail ! I see and bless the sight,
First-born of Heav'n, pure source of intellectual
light.

On her the monarch fix'd his eager eyes,
On her alone, regardless of the crowd :
" Let vulgar souls," he cried, " yon trifles prize,
Mortals that dare of misery to be proud,

Hence, then : I burn for more ingenuous charms ;
Nature's true beauties with more lustre shine.
Then, take me, Wisdom, take me to thy arms ;
O snatch me from myself, and make me thine.
All Heav'n calls good, or man felicity,
Peace, plenty, health, content, are all comprised
in thee."

King Solomon and the Bees

By JOHN GODFREY SAXE

WHEN Solomon was reigning in his glory,
Unto his throne the queen of Sheba came,
(So in the Talmud you may read the story)

Drawn by the magic of the monarch's fame,
To see the splendors of his court, and bring
Some fitting tribute to the mighty king.

Nor this alone; much had her highness heard
What flowers of learning graced the royal
speech;
What gems of wisdom dropped with every word;
What wholesome lessons he was wont to teach
In pleasing proverbs; and she wished, in sooth,
To know if Rumor spoke the simple truth.

Besides the queen had heard (which piqued her
most)

How through the deepest riddles he would spy ;
How all the curious arts that women boast

Were quite transparent to his piercing eye ;
And so the queen had come—a royal quest—
To put the sage's cunning to the test.

And straight she held before the monarch's view
In either hand a radiant wreath of flowers ;
The one, bedecked with every charming hue,
Was newly culled from Nature's choicest bow-
ers.

The other, no less fair in every part,
Was the rare product of divinest Art.

“ Which is the true, and which the false ? ” she
said.

Great Solomon was silent. All amazed,
Each wondering courtier shook his puzzled head,
While at the garlands long the monarch gazed,
As one who sees a miracle, and fain,
For very rapture, ne'er would speak again.

“ Which is the true? ” once more the woman asked,

Pleased at the fond amazement of the king,
“ So wise a head should not be hardly tasked,
Most learned Liege, with such a trivial thing ! ”
And still the sage was silent ; it was plain
A deepening doubt perplexed the royal brain.

While thus he pondered, presently he sees,
Hard by the casement,—so the story goes,—
A little band of busy, bustling bees,
Hunting for honey in a withered rose.
The monarch smiled, and raised his royal head ;
“ Open the window ”—that was all he said.

The window opened at the king’s command,
Within the room the eager insects flew,
And sought the flowers in Sheba’s dexter hand !
And so the king and all the courtiers knew
That wreath was Nature’s ; and the baffled queen
Returned to tell the wonders she had seen.

My story teaches (every tale should bear
A fitting moral) that the wise may find
In trifles light as atoms in the air
Some useful lesson to enrich the mind,—
Some truth designed to profit or to please,—
As Israel's king learned wisdom from the bees !

King Solomon and the Ants

BY JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

OUT from Jerusalem
The king rode with his great
War chiefs and lords of state,
And Sheba's queen with them;

Comely, but black withal,
To whom, perchance, belongs
That wondrous Song of songs,
Sensuous and mystical.

Proud in the Syrian sun,
In gold and purple sheen,
The dusky Ethiop queen
Smiled on King Solomon.

Wisest of men, he knew
The languages of all
The creatures great or small
That trod the earth or flew.

Across an ant-hill led
The king's path, and he heard
Its small folk, and their word
He thus interpreted:

“Here comes the king men greet
As wise and good and just,
To crush us in the dust
Under his heedless feet.”

The great king bowed his head,
And saw the wide surprise
Of the Queen of Sheba's eyes
As he told her what they said.

“O King!” she whispered sweet,
“Too happy fate have they -
Who perish in thy way
Beneath thy gracious feet!

“Thou of the God-lent crown,
Shall these vile creatures dare
Murmur against thee where
The knees of kings kneel down?”

“Nay,” Solomon replied,
“The wise and strong should seek
The welfare of the weak,”
And turned his horse aside.

His train, with quick alarm,
Curved with their leader round
The ant-hill’s peopled mound,
And left it free from harm.

The jewelled head bent low;
“O King!” she said, “henceforth
The secret of thy worth
And wisdom well I know.

“Happy must be the State
Whose ruler heedeth more
The murmurs of the poor
Than flatteries of the great.”

Solomon and Azraël

BY RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

(From *Eastern Moralities*)

SATE in his presence-chamber Solomon ;
When thither of his princes entered one,
Haste in his step, and terror in his eye,
And cried, "O King, defend me, or I die ;
Even now I saw with visage dark and fell
Gaze on me the Death-angel Azraël."
To him the King : " What help may I afford ? "
" Oh, bid the storm-wind, gracious mighty lord,
That it to farthest India waft me straight ;
And there my life shall reach a longer date."
To farthest India at the King's command
The storm-wind swept him over sea and land.
But when the Spirits met another day,
To the Death-angel spake the Monarch : " Say,

Why did thy terrors that poor man affright,
Till he for anguish well-nigh died outright,
That poor man, whom I sheltered with my
might?"

Then he: "I meant not dreadful to appear,
But only wondered to behold him here;
For God had bid me on that very day
From farthest Ind to fetch his soul away.
I thought, Were thousand pinions given to thee,
To-day in India thou shouldst never be;
Nor guessed how this should be fulfilled, till there
Thy word did waft him, answering to his prayer."

King Solomon

By OWEN MEREDITH

KING Solomon stood, in his crown of gold,
Between the pillars, before the altar,
In the House of the Lord. And the King was old,
And his strength began to falter,
So that he leaned on his ebony staff,
Sealed with the seal of the Pentagraph.

All of the golden fretted work
Without and within so rich and rare,
As high as the nest of the building stork,
Those pillars of cedar were:—
Wrought up to the brazen chapters
Of the Sidonian artificers.

And the King stood still as a carven king,
The carven cedar beams below,

In his purple robe, with his signet-ring,
And his beard as white as snow,
And his face to the Oracle, where the hymn
Dies under the wing of the cherubim.

By the soul of each slumbrous instrument
Drawn soft through the musical misty air,
The stream of the folk that came and went,
For worship and praise and prayer,
Flowed to and fro, and up and down,
And round the King in his golden crown.

And it came to pass, as the King stood there,
And looked on the house he had built, with
pride,
That the Hand of the Lord came unaware,
And touched him, so that he died,
In his purple robe, with his signet-ring,
And the crown wherewith they had crowned him
king.

And the stream of the folk that came and went,
To worship the Lord with prayer and praise,
Went softly ever, in wonderment,
For the King stood there always ;
And it was solemn and strange to behold
That dead king crowned with a crown of gold.

For he leaned on his ebony staff upright ;
And over his shoulders the purple robe ;
And his hair and his beard were both snow-white,
And the fear of him filled the globe ;
So that none dared touch him, though he was dead,
He looked so royal about the head.

And the moons were changed : and the years
rolled on :
And the new king reigned in the old king's
stead :
And men were married and buried anon ;
But the King stood, stark and dead,
Leaning upright on his ebony staff,
Preserved by the sign of the Pentagram.

And the stream of life, as it went and came,
Ever for worship and praise and prayer,
Was awed by the face, and the fear, and the fame,
Of the dead King standing there ;
For his hair was so white, and his eyes so cold,
That they left him alone with his crown of gold.

So King Solomon stood up, dead, in the House
Of the Lord, held there by the Pentegraph,
Until out from a pillar there ran a red mouse,
And gnawed through the ebony staff :
Then flat on his face the King fell down :
And they picked from the dust a golden crown.

The Lions

By VICTOR HUGO

(Translated by Mrs. Newton Crosland)

FAMISHED, the lions were in their strong den,
And roared appeal to Nature from the men
Who caged them—Nature that for them had care.
Kept for three days without their needful fare,
The creatures raved with hunger and with hate,
And through their roof of chains and iron grate
Looked to the blood-red sunset in the west ;
Their cries the distant traveller oppress'd
Far as horizon which the blue hill veils.

Fiercely they lashed their bodies with their tails
Till the walls shook ; as if their eyes' red light
And hungry jaws had lent them added might.

By Og and his great sons was shaped the cave,
They hollowed it, in need themselves to save.

It was a deep-laid place wherein to hide,
This giant's palace in the rock's dark side ;
Their heads had broken through the roof of stone,
So that the light in every corner shone,
And dreary dungeon had for dome blue sky.
Nebuchadnezzar, savage king, had eye
For this strong cavern, and a pavement laid
Upon the centre, that it should be made
A place where lions he could safely mew ;
Though once Deucalions and Khans it knew.

The beasts were four most furious all. The
ground
Was carpeted with bones that lay all round,
While, as they walked and crunched with heavy
tread
Men's skeletons and brutes', far overhead
The tapering shadows of the rocks were spread.

The first had come from Sodom's desert plain ;
When savage freedom did to him remain

He dwelt at Sin, extremest point and rude
Of silence terrible and solitude.

Oh! woe betide who fell beneath his claw,
This Lion of the sand with rough-skinned paw.

The second came from forest water'd by
The stream Euphrates ; when his step drew nigh,
Descending to the river, all things feared.
Hard fight to snare this growler it appeared.
The hounds of two kings were employed to catch
This Lion of the woods and be his match.

The third one dwelt on the steep mountain's side,
Horror and gloom companion'd every stride :
When towards the miry ravines they would stray,
And herds and flocks in their wild gambols play,
All fled—the shepherd, warrior, priest—in fright
If he leaped forth in all his dreadful might.

The fourth tremendous, furious creature came
From the sea-shore, and prowled with leonine
fame,

Before he knew captivity's hard throes,
Along the coast where Gur's strong city rose.
Reeking its roofs, and in its ports were met
The masts of many nations thickly set.

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This lion scorned complaint, but crouching lay
And yawned, so heavily time passed away.
Master'd by man sharp hunger thus he bore,
Yet weariness of woe oppressed him sore.

But to and fro the others stamp all three,
And if a fluttering bird outside they see,
They gnaw its shadow as they mark it soar,
Their hunger growing as they hoarsely roar.

In a dark corner of the cavern dim
Quite suddenly there oped a portal grim,
And pushed by brawny arms that fright betrayed,
Appeared a man in grave-clothes white arrayed.

The grating closed as closing up a tomb;
The Man was with the Lions in the gloom.
The monsters foamed, and rushed their prey to
gain,
With frightful yell, while bristled every mane.
Their howling roar expressing keenest hate
Of savage nature rebel to its fate,
With anger dashed by fear. Then spoke the Man,
And stretching forth his hands his words thus
ran,
“ May peace be with you, Lions.” Paused the
beasts.

The wolves that disinter the dead for feasts,
The flat-skulled bears, and writhing jackals, they
Who prowl at shipwrecks on the rocks for prey,
Are fierce, hyenas are unpitying found,
And watchful tiger felling at one bound.
But the strong lion in his stately force
Will sometimes lift the paw, yet stay its course,

He the lone dreamer in the shadows gray.
And now the Lions grouped themselves; and they
Amid the ruins looked like elders set
On grave discussion, in a conclave met,
With knitted brows intent disputes to end,
While over them a dead tree's branches bend.

First spoke the Lion of the sandy plain
And said, "When this man entered I again
Beheld the midday sun, and felt the blast
Of the hot simoon blown o'er spaces vast.
Oh, this man from the desert comes, I see."

Then spoke the Lion of the woods: "For me,
One time where fig and palm and cedars grow,
And holly, day and night came music's flow
To fill my joyous cave; even when still
All life, the foliage round me seemed to thrill
With song. When this man spoke a sound was
made

Like that from birds' nests in the mossy shade.
This man has journey'd from my forest home!"

And now the one which had the nearest come,
The Lion black from mountains huge, exclaimed :
“ This man is like to Caucasus, far-famed,
Where no rock stirs ; the majesty has he
Of Atlas. When his arm he raised all free,
I thought that Lebanon had made a bound,
And thrown its shadow vast on fields around.
This man comes to us from the mountain’s side.”

The Lion dweller near the ocean wide,
Whose roar was loud as roar of frothing sea,
Spoke last. “ My sons, my habit is,” said he,
“ In sight of grandeur wholly to ignore
All enmity ; and this is why the shore
Became my home ; I watched the sun arise
And moon, and the grave smile of dawn ; mine
eyes
Grew used to the sublime—while waves rolled by
I learn’d great lessons of eternity.
Now, how this Man is named I do not know,
But in his eyes I see the heavens’ glow ;
This man, with brow so calm, by God is sent.”

When night had darken'd the blue firmament,
The keeper wished to see inside the gate,
And pressed his pale face 'gainst the fasten'd
grate.

In the dim depth stood Daniel calm of mien,
With eyes uplifted to the stars serene,
While this the sight for wondering gaze to meet,
The Lions fawning at the Captive's feet!

The History of the Destruction of Bel and the Dragon

THE APOCRYPHA

NOW the Babylonians had an idol, called Bel, and there were spent upon him every day twelve great measures of fine flour, and forty sheep, and six vessels of wine.

And the king worshipped it, and went daily to adore it; but Daniel worshipped his own God. And the king said unto him, Why dost not thou worship Bel?

Who answered and said, Because I may not worship idols made with hands, but the living God, who hath created the heaven and the earth, and hath sovereignty over all flesh.

Then said the king unto him, Thinkest thou not that Bel is a living God? seest thou not how much he eateth and drinketh every day?

Then Daniel smiled, and said, O king, be not deceived: for this is but clay within, and brass without, and did never eat or drink anything.

So the king was wroth, and called for his priests, and said unto them, If ye tell me not who this is that devoureth these expenses, ye shall die.

But if ye can certify me that Bel devoureth them, then Daniel shall die: for he hath spoken blasphemy against Bel. And Daniel said unto the king, Let it be according to thy word.

Now the priests of Bel were three-score and ten, beside their wives and children. And the king went with Daniel into the temple of Bel.

So Bel's priests said, Lo, we go out: but thou, O king, set on the meat, and make ready the wine, and shut the door fast, and seal it with thine own signet;

And to-morrow when thou comest in, if thou findest not that Bel hath eaten up all, we will suffer death; or else Daniel, who speaketh falsely against us.

And they little regarded it; for under the table they had made a privy entrance, whereby they entered in continually, and consumed those things.

So when they were gone forth, the king set meats before Bel. Now Daniel had commanded his servants to bring ashes, and those they strewed throughout all the temple in the presence of the king alone: then they went out and shut the door, and sealed it with the king's signet, and so departed.

Now in the night came the priests with their wives and children, as they were wont to do, and did eat and drink up all.

In the morning betime the king arose, and Daniel with him.

And the king said, Daniel, are the seals whole? And he said, Yea, O king, they be whole.

And as soon as he had opened the door, the king looked upon the table, and cried with a loud voice, Great art thou, O Bel, and with thee is no deceit at all.

Then laughed Daniel, and held the king that he should not go in, and said, Behold now the pavement, and mark well whose footsteps are those.

And the king said, I see the footsteps of men, women, and children. And then the king was angry,

And took the priests with their wives and children, who showed him the privy doors, where they came in, and consumed such things as were upon the table.

Therefore the king slew them, and delivered Bel into Daniel's power, who destroyed him and his temple.

And in the same place there was a great dragon, which they of Babylon worshipped.

And the king said unto Daniel, Wilt thou also say that this is of brass? lo, he liveth, he eateth and drinketh; thou canst not say that he is no living god; therefore worship him.

Then said Daniel unto the king, I will worship the Lord my God: for he is the living God.

But give me leave, O king, and I shall slay this dragon without sword or staff. The king said, I give thee leave.

Then Daniel took pitch, and fat, and hair, and did seethe them together, and made lumps thereof: this he put in the dragon's mouth, and so the dragon burst in sunder: and Daniel said, Lo, these are the gods ye worship.

When they of Babylon heard that, they took great indignation, and conspired against the king, saying, The king is become a Jew, and he hath destroyed Bel, he hath slain the dragon, and put the priests to death.

So they came to the king, and said, Deliver us Daniel, or else we will destroy thee and thine house.

Now when the king saw that they pressed him sore, being constrained, he delivered Daniel unto them:

Who cast him into the lion's den: where he was six days.

And in the den there were seven lions, and they had given them every day two carcasses and two sheep: which then were not given to them, to the intent they might devour Daniel.

Now there was in Jewry a prophet, called Habbacuc, who had made a pottage, and had broken bread in a bowl, and was going into the field, for to bring it to the reapers.

But the angel of the Lord said unto Habbacuc, Go, carry the dinner that thou hast into Babylon unto Daniel, who is in the lions' den.

And Habbacuc said, Lord, I never saw Babylon; neither do I know where the den is.

Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown, and bare him by the hair of his head, and through the vehemency of his spirit set him in Babylon over the den.

And Habbacuc cried, saying, O Daniel, Daniel, take the dinner which God hath sent thee.

And Daniel said, Thou hast remembered me,

O God ; neither hast thou forsaken them that seek thee and love thee.

So Daniel arose, and did eat: and the angel of the Lord set Habbacuc in his own place again immediately.

Upon the seventh day the king went to bewail Daniel: and when he came to the den, he looked in, and, behold, Daniel was sitting.

Then cried the king with a loud voice, saying, Great art thou, O Lord God of Daniel, and there is none other beside thee.

The Story of Tobit and Tobias

(Adapted from THE APOCRYPHA)

TOBIT called his son Tobias and said, " My son, when I am dead, bury me ; and despise not thy mother, but honor her all the days of thy life, and do that which shall please her, and grieve her not ; and when she is dead, bury her by me in one grave. And now I signify this to thee, that I committed ten talents to Gabael at Rages in Media. Fear not, my son, that we are made poor, for thou hast much wealth if thou fear God and depart from all sin and do that which is pleasing in His sight."

Tobias then answered and said, " Father, I will do all things which thou hast commanded me ; but how can I receive the money, seeing that I know him not ? "

Then he gave him the handwriting, and said

unto him, "Seek thee a man that may go with thee while I yet live, and I will give him wages; and go and receive the money."

When he went to seek a man, he found Raphael, that was an angel, but he knew it not, and he said to him, "Canst thou go with me to Rages? and knowest thou those places well?"

To whom the angel said, "I will go with thee, and I know the way well."

Then Tobias said unto him, "Tarry for me till I tell my father."

He said unto him, "Go and tarry not."

So he went in and said to his father, "Behold, I have found one which will go with me."

Then he said, "Call him unto me, that I may know of what tribe he is, and whether he be a trusty man to go with thee."

So he called him, and he came in, and they saluted one another.

Then Tobit said unto him, "Brother, show me of what tribe and family thou art."

Then he said, "I am Azarias, the son of Ananias the great, and of thy brethren."

Then Tobit said, "Thou art welcome, brother; thou art of a good stock; but tell me what wages shall I give thee? Wilt thou a drachm a day, and things necessary, as unto my own son?"

So they were well pleased. Then said he unto Tobias, "Prepare thyself for the journey, and God send you a good journey."

When he had prepared all things for the journey, his father said, "Go thou with this man, and God, which dwelleth in heaven, prosper your journey, and the angel of God keep you company."

So they went forth both.

As they went on the journey, they came in the evening to the river Tigris, and they lodged there; and when the young man went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river, and would have devoured him.

Then the angel said unto him, "Take the fish,"

and the young man laid hold of the fish and drew it to land. To whom the angel said, "Open the fish, and take the heart, and the liver, and the gall, and put them up safely."

The young man did as the angel commanded him, and when they had roasted the fish, they did eat it; then they both went on their way till they drew near to Ecbatane.

The young man said to the angel, "Brother Azarias, to what use is the heart, and the liver, and the gall of the fish?"

And he said unto him, "Touching the heart and the liver, if a devil or an evil spirit trouble any, we must make a smoke thereof before the men or the women, and the party shall be no more vexed; as for the gall, it is good to anoint a man who has whiteness in his eyes, and he shall be healed."

When they came near to Rages, the angel said to the young man, "Brother, to-night we shall lodge with Raguel who is thy cousin; he has one

only daughter named Sara ; I will speak for her that she may be given thee for a wife, for to thee doth the right to her appertain, seeing thou only art of her kindred. The maid is fair and wise ; now therefore hear me and I will speak to her father, and when we return from Rages we will celebrate the marriage."

The young man answered the angel, " I have heard, brother Azarias, that this maid has been given to seven men who all died in the marriage chamber. Now I am the only son of my father, and I am afraid that I die as the others before me ; for a wicked spirit loveth her who hurteth no body but those who marry her, wherefore I fear lest I die and bring my father's and my mother's life, because of me, to the grave with sorrow ; and they have no other son to bury them."

Then the angel said unto him, " Dost thou not remember the precepts which thy father gave thee, that thou shouldst marry a wife of thy own kin-

dred? When thou shalt come into the marriage chamber thou shalt take the ashes of perfume, and shalt lay upon them some of the heart and the liver of the fish, and shalt make a smoke with it, and the devil shall smell it and flee away and never come back again any more."

When they were come to Ecbatane, they came to the house of Raguel, and Sara met them, and after they had saluted one another she brought them into the house.

Then said Raguel to Edna his wife, "How like is the young man to Tobit my cousin."

And Raguel asked them, "From whence are ye, brethren?"

To whom they said, "We are of the sons of Nephthalim, which are captives in Nineve."

Then he said to them, "Do you know Tobit our kinsman?" and they said, "We know him."

Then said he, "Is he in good health?"

And they said, "He is both alive and in good health." And Tobias said, "He is my father."

Then Raguel leaped up and kissed him and wept, and blessed him and said, "Thou art the son of an honest and good man." But when he had heard that Tobit was blind, he was sorrowful and wept. Likewise Edna his wife and Sara his daughter wept.

After they had killed a ram of the flock, they set store of meat on the table.

Then said Tobias to Raphael, "Brother Azarias, speak of those things of which thou didst talk in the way, and let this business be despatched."

So he communicated the matter with Raguel, and Raguel said, "Eat and drink and make merry, for it is meet that thou shouldst marry my daughter, nevertheless I will declare unto thee the truth. I have given my daughter in marriage to seven men who died that same night, nevertheless for the present be merry."

But Tobias said, "I will eat nothing here, till we agree and swear one to another."

Raguel said, "Then take her, for she is thy cousin, and the merciful God give you good success in all things."

Then he called his daughter Sara, and she came to her father, and he took her by the hand and gave her to be wife to Tobias, saying, "Behold, take her, after the law of Moses, and lead her away to thy father," and he blessed them and called Edna his wife, and took paper and did write an instrument of covenant and sealed it. Then they did begin to eat.

Then Tobias remembered the words of Raphael, and he took the ashes of perfume, and put the heart and the liver of the fish thereupon, and made a smoke therewith, the which when the evil spirit had smelled, he fled into the utmost parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him.

And Raguel kept the wedding feast fourteen days.

Then Tobias called Raphael and said to him,

“Brother Azarias, take with thee a servant and two camels, and go to Rages, to Gabael, and bring me the money and bring him to the wedding.”

So Raphael went out, and lodged with Gabael, and gave him the handwriting ; who brought forth bags which were sealed up and gave them to him ; and early in the morning they went forth both together and came to the wedding.

Now Tobit, Tobias’ father, counted every day, and when the days of the journey were expired and they came not, he said, “Are they detained ? Or is Gabael dead, and there is no one to give him the money ? ”

Then his wife said unto him, “ My son is dead, seeing he stayeth long,” and she began to bewail him, and she went out every day into the way which they went, and did eat no meat on the day-time, and ceased not the whole night to bewail her son Tobias, until the fourteen days of the wedding were expired.

Then Tobias said to Raguel, "Let me go, for my father and my mother look no more to see me."

Then Raguel arose, and gave him Sara his wife and half his goods, servants, and cattle, and money, and he blessed them and sent them away, saying, "The God of heaven give you a prosperous journey, my children."

After these things Tobias went his way, praising God, that He had given him a prosperous journey, and blessed Raguel and Edna his wife, and went on the way till they drew near to Nineve.

Then Raphael said to Tobias, "Thou knowest, brother, how thou didst leave thy father. Let us haste before thy wife and prepare the house, and take in thy hand the gall of the fish."

Now Anna sat looking about toward the way for her son, and when she espied him coming, she said to his father, "Behold, thy son cometh, and the man that went with him."

Then said Raphael, "I know, Tobias, that thy father will open his eyes, therefore anoint thou his eyes with the gall, and being pricked therewith, he shall rub, and the whiteness shall fall away and he shall see thee."

Then Anna ran forth, and fell upon the neck of her son, and said unto him, "Seeing I have seen my son, I am content to die."

Tobit also went forth toward the door and stumbled, but his son ran unto him, and took hold of his father, and he brake the gall on his father's eyes, and when his eyes began to smart, he rubbed them, and the whiteness pilled away from the corners of his eyes ; and when he saw his son, he fell upon his neck and wept and said, "Blessed art Thou, O God, and blessed be Thy name forever."

Then Tobit went out to meet his daughter-in-law at the gate of Nineve, rejoicing and praising God. And Tobias' wedding was kept seven days with great joy.

Then Tobit called his son Tobias and said unto him, "My son, see that the man have his wages that went with thee, and thou must give him more."

And Tobias said unto him, "O father, it is no harm to me to give him half of those things which I have brought, for he hath brought me again to thee in safety, and made whole my wife, and brought me the money, and likewise healed thee."

Then the old man said, "It is due unto him."

So he called the angel, and he said unto him, "Take half of all that ye have brought and go away in safety."

Then he took them both apart, and said unto them, "Bless God, praise Him and magnify Him, and praise Him for the things which He hath done unto you in the sight of all that live. It is good to praise God and exalt His name and honorably to show forth the works of God, therefore be not slack to praise Him."

“I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.”

Then they were both troubled, and fell upon their faces, for they feared. But he said unto them, “Fear not, for it shall go well with you: Praise God therefore; for not of any favor of mine, but by the will of our God I came. Wherefore praise Him forever and ever. All these days I did appear unto you, but I did neither eat nor drink, but ye did see a vision. Now therefore give God thanks; for I go up to Him that sent me; but write all things which are done in a book.”

And when they arose they saw him no more.

Let us Depart

BY FELICIA HEMANS

[It is mentioned by Josephus, that a short time previous to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the priests going by night into the inner court of the Temple to perform their sacred ministrations at the feast of Pentecost, felt a quaking, and heard a rushing noise, and after that a sound as of a great multitude saying, "Let us depart."]

NIGHT hung on Salem's towers,
And a brooding hush profound
Lay where the Roman eagle shone,
High o'er the tents around,

The tents that rose by thousands,
In the moonlight glimmering pale;
Like white waves of a frozen sea,
Filling an Alpine vale.

And the Temple's massy shadow
Fell broad, and dark, and still,
In peace, as if the Holy One
Yet watched His chosen hill.

But a fearful sound was heard
In that old fane's deepest heart,
As if mighty wings rush'd by,
And a dread voice raised the cry,
"Let us depart!"

Within the fated city
E'en then fierce discord raved,
Though o'er night's heaven the comet sword
Its vengeful token waved.

There were shouts of kindred warfare
Through the dark streets ringing high,
Though every sign was full which told
Of the bloody vintage nigh.

Though the wild red spears and arrows
Of many a meteor host
Went flashing o'er the holy stars,
In the sky, now seen, now lost.

And that fearful sound was heard
In the Temple's deepest heart,
As if mighty wings rush'd by,
And a voice cried mournfully,
“ Let us depart ! ”

But within the fated city
There was revelry that night ;
The wine-cup and the timbrel note,
And the blaze of banquet light.

The footsteps of the dancer
Went bounding through the hall,
And the music of the dulcimer
Summon'd to festival.

While the clash of brother weapons
Made lightning in the air,
And the dying at the palace gates
Lay down in their despair.

And that fearful sound was heard
At the Temple's thrilling heart,
As if mighty wings rush'd by,
And a dread voice raised the cry,
“Let us depart!”

The Last Day of Jerusalem

BY GEORGE CROLY

FROM morn to eve, Rome's iron tide
Had dashed on Zion's haughty side ;
From morn to eve, the arrowy shower
Rained on her ranks from wall and tower.
Now rose the shout of Israel ;
Now, like the sea's returning swell,
Rushed up the mount the Roman charge,
Again beat back by Judah's targe ;
Strewing with helm and shield the hill ;
All wearied, but th' unconquered will.
'Twas eve, and still was fought the field,
Where none could win, and none would yield ;
Beneath the twilight's deepening shade
Echoed the clash of blade on blade.
Still rushing through the living cloud
Its path the Lion-banner ploughed ;

And still the Eagle's fiery wing
Seemed from the living cloud to spring ;
Till Rome's retiring trump was blown,
Answered by shouts from Zion's throne.
That day the Romans learned to feel
The biting of the Jewish steel.

'Twas night. The sounds of earth were hushed,
Save where the palace-fountains gushed ;
Or from the myrtle-breathing vale
Sung, to the stars, the nightingale.
Splendid the scene, and sweet the hour !
The moonbeams silvered tent and tower,
Touched into beauty grove and rill,
And crowned with lustre Zion's hill.
All loveliness, but where the gaze
Shrank from the Roman's camp-fire's blaze ;
All peaceful beauty, but where frowned,
Omen of woe, the Roman Mound.*

* The Romans surrounded the city with a trench and a mound, which prevented all escape, and formed a characteristic of the siege.

'Twas midnight; ceased the heavy jar
Of rampart-chain and portal bar;
That hour of doom, on Zion's wall
No warrior's foot was heard to fall;
No murmur of the mighty camp,
No cohort's tread, no charger's champ,
Gave sign that earth was living still;
All hushed, as by a mightier Will;
Ev'n wounds that wring, and eyes that weep,
Were bound in one resistless sleep:
Silence of silence all around;
Hushed as the grave—a death of sound!

But sudden roars the thunder-peal,
The forests on the mountains reel,
And, like the bursts of mountain springs,
Is heard a rush of mighty wings!
And voices sweet of love and woe
(Love, such as spirits only know)

Swell from the Temple's cloisters dim,
A mingled chaunt of dirge and hymn ;
Like grief, when help and hope have fled,
Like anguish o'er the dying bed ;
Like pulses of a breaking heart :
" We must depart, we must depart."
And grandly o'er Moriah's height,
Encanopied in living light,
Rose to that chaunt of dirge and hymn
The squadrons of the Seraphim.
From Carmel's shore to Hebron's chain,
Shone in that splendor hill and plain ;
Still starlike seemed the orb to soar,
Then all was night, and sleep once more.

But whence has come that sudden flash,
And whence the shout, and whence the clash ?
The Legions scale the Temple wall !
Its startled warriors fly or fall.
Now swells the carnage, wild and wide ;
Now dies the bridegroom by the bride ;

Peasant and noble, parent, child,
In heaps of quivering carnage piled ;
On golden roof, on cedar floor,
Still flames the torch, still flows the gore ;
Hour of consummate agony,
When nations, God-deserted, die !

Yet still the native dirk and knife
Wrung blood for blood, and life for life.
The priest, as to the Veil he clung,
With dying hand the javelin flung ;
The peasant on the Roman sprang,
Armed but with panther's foot and fang,
From his strong grasp the falchion tore,
And dyed it in the robber's gore.
That night who fought, that night who fell,
No eye might see, no tongue might tell ;
That sanguine record must be read
But when the grave gives up its dead ;
Then Judah's heart of pride was tame,
The rest was sorrow, slavery, shame !

Three Sons

A TALMUDIC LEGEND

BY EMMA LEIGH

LADEN with luscious fruits and delicious meats was the table from which the old Simon arose.

“ My son,” said he, with a proud and grateful face, “ whence didst thou procure these dainties to delight the heart of thy father ? ”

“ Eat as the dogs do, old man ; ask me no questions,” and the churlish fellow went impatiently away.

The father sank heavily into his seat, a grief-bowed figure. All joy had left his heart. Bitterly he recalled the story of Daniah the son of Mettiniah, an idol-worshipper.

The ephod of the high-priest had lacked a stone

which the sages knew Mettiniah could supply. On entering the house they told Daniah their wish. Now the key to the jewel chest was kept by Mettiniah, who slept. Not even when the sage doubled the price for the gem could Daniah be won to disturb his father.

When Mettiniah awoke, Daniah brought them the stone. The sages gave him the full price they had offered. Half of it he returned with the words, "I will not profit by my father's honor."

Sorrowfully the old man weighed the deeds of the two sons, his and Mettiniah's.

As he mused, a knock sounded on the door, and a young miller, his great favorite, entered.

The new-comer knelt to receive the old man's blessing.

"I leave the village early in the morning," he explained. "The government exacts my service."

"But I thought it was thy sire's duty to go, for it is he that does no work. Thou hast thy mill."

"Father toils at the mill, and I take his place among the road-makers and bridge-builders," answered the other. "It was told me that the overseers are harsh, and my father is an old man. I can bear stripes better than he."

With tear-filled eyes the old man kissed the lad, and sent him away with a blessing, "God be with thee, since thou dost obey His command to honor thy father."

From these things comes the saying of the Sages:

"Better was the son that set his father to grind in the mill, than he that fed his father upon dainties."

Sabbation

A JEWISH LEGEND

BY RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

BY the dark mountains guarded well, and on
the other side
Of Havila, for gold renowned, a land lies broad
and wide.
Four-square it lies—a man at speed might travel
every way,
And would not pass from end to end until the
ninetieth day.
The mountains with their barriers dark upon three
sides enclose
This goodly land, but on the fourth a wondrous
river flows;
Between whose banks no water rolls, but rush and
roar along
Rocks, stones, and sand, together mixed, with
tumult loud and strong;

And higher than the houses' tops huge fragments
leap and fly—

But on the holy seventh day it sleepeth quietly.
Sabbation it is therefore named, for on the Sab-
bath day

From eve till eve again comes back, that river
sleeps alway;

Without a sound or slightest stir that day it doth
remain,

But then, the Sabbath done, returns unto its
strength again—

So fierce that if in middle stream were set an
adamant rock,

It would be shattered presently before the furious
shock.

By night a two days' journey off its rushing heard
may be,

Like thunder, like a mighty wind, or like the
roaring sea.

Behind this river dwell secure the children of the race,

Which had on Israel's mountains once their quiet resting-place;

Till to the Assyrian for their sins delivered for a prey,

Who from their soil uprooted them, and planted far away.

But they, when in that foreign land awhile they had remained,

Said,—‘ Let us rise and seek some place by idols unprofaned,

Where we, by sore affliction taught, at length may understand,

And keep the law we never kept while in our former land.’

This counsel taking with themselves, and caring not for foes,

And caring not for length of way, nor danger, they arose;

They rose together, and dryshod the great Eu-
phrates passed,
And ever journeying northward reached this
goodly land at last—
A goodly land—with all good things their old land
knew supplied,
And all the plagues that vexed them there for-
ever turned aside :
A land of streams that fear no drought, that
never fail to flow,
Of wells not fed by scanty rains, but springing
from below ;
Where never upon sounding wing advance the
locust swarm,
To hide the noon-day sun, and bring to every
green thing harm ;
Where never from the desert blows the scorching
fiery wind,
That breathes o'er fields of flowers, and leaves a
wilderness behind :

The early and the latter rain their heavens ne'er
refuse,
And what the day burns up, the night repairs
with copious dews.
With their own hands they till the ground, and
have of nothing lack;
The grain upon their furrows cast a hundred-
fold gives back,
And twice the cattle on their hills yield increase
every year,
And trees that in no other land bear fruit are
laden here.
Not readier on Engeddi's steeps the wounded
balsam sheds
Its life's blood, and the Indian nard lifts here
its spiky heads.
And gardens of delight are theirs; and what is
strange elsewhere
Of costly gum or fragrant spice, is counted com-
mon there;

No snake or scorpion, fox or dog, nor any beast
unclean,

Nor aught that can bring harm to man, through
all the land is seen.

A little child will feed the flocks in forests far
away,

Not fearing man, nor evil beast, nor demon of
noon-day.

And theirs the ancient Hebrew tongue, the speech
which angels love;

And their true prayers in that are made, and
always heard above—

Heard, too, in doleful worlds below, where at
their hours of prayer

The anguish intermits awhile, the hopeless misery
there.

And often when a man goes forth in lonely wilds
to pray,

An angel then will meet him there, and—Grace
be with thee!—say;

No child before his parent's eyes is laid on funeral
bier,
And none departs that has not reached his happy
hundredth year;
That has not at the least beheld his children's
children rise
About his knees, to glad his heart and cheer his
failing eyes.
Nor is the life then torn away by rude and painful
death,
But Gabriel with a gentle kiss draws out the
flitting breath:
And when the soul arrives at last in Paradise,
there wait
A crowd of ministering spirits there around its
ruby gate;
They put the sordid grave-clothes off, in raiment
pure and white
They clothe him, glistening garments spun from
glorious clouds of light;

They set two crowns upon his head, of purest
gold is one,
The other diadem is wrought of pearl and pre-
cious stone ;
And giving myrtle in his hand, they praise him
and they say,
' Go in and eat thy bread henceforth with glad-
ness every day.'
The day before a child is born, the angel, that
is given
To be his guide and guard through life, and lead
him safe to heaven,
In spirit takes him where the Blest with light
divine are fed,
Each sitting on his golden throne, his crown upon
his head ;
' And these,' he says, ' are they who loved the law
of the Most High,
And such by His eternal grace come hither when
they die :

Live thou and be an heir at length through mercy
of this grace,

Since thou must for thy warning know there is
another place.'

The angel carries then that soul at eventide to
hell,

Where the ungodly evermore in painful prison
dwell.

'These wretched once, as thou wilt soon, the
breath of life did draw,

And therefore be thou wise betimes, and keep and
love the law.'

And if one see his brother sin, or hear him speak-
ing vain

Or evil words, he leaves him not unchidden to
remain,

But in just anger says to him, 'My brother, wilt
thou know

That sin upon our fathers brought God's wrath
and all their woe?'

And thus doth each one each exhort, in righteousness and fear,
And with true hearts the righteous Lord to honor and revere .

At break of morning every day, the noblest of the land
In pomp and solemn state ride forth, a high exulting band,
As though to welcome and to greet and lead in triumph home
Some Royal Stranger, looked for long, who now at length should come.
With some dejection on their brows at evening they return—
Why comes He not? why tarries He until another morn?
But soon the shadow from their brows, the gloom has passed away;
And that rejoicing troop goes forth upon the following day—

As high of hope, in all their state, they issue forth
again,

Sure that their high-raised hope will not prove
evermore in vain;

That He will one day come, indeed, and with a
mighty hand

Will lead them back to repossess their old, their
glorious land.

Alexander the Great at Jerusalem

BY JAMES K. HOSMER

(From *The Story of the Jews*)

IN David's time, the population of Palestine must have numbered several millions, and it largely increased during the succeeding reigns. Multitudes, however, had perished by the sword, and other multitudes were retained in strange lands. Scarcely fifty thousand found their way back in the time of Cyrus to the desolate site of Jerusalem, but, one hundred years later, the number was increased by a re-enforcement under Ezra. From this nucleus, with astonishing vitality, a new Israel was presently developed. With weapons always at hand to repel the freebooters of the desert, they constructed once more the walls of Jerusalem. Through all their harsh experience their feelings of nationality had not

been at all abated ; their blood was untouched by foreign admixture, though some gentile ideas had entered into the substance of their faith. The conviction that they were the chosen people of God was as unshaken as in the ancient time. With pride as indomitable as ever, intrenched within their little corner of Syria, they confronted the hostile world.

But a new contact was at hand ; far more memorable even than that with the nations of Mesopotamia—a contact whose consequences affect at the present hour the condition of the greater part of the human race. In the year 332 B. C., the high-priest, Jaddua, at Jerusalem, was in an agony, not knowing how he should meet certain new invaders of the land, before whom Tyre, and Gaza, the old Philistine stronghold, had fallen, and who were now marching upon the city of David. But God warned him in a dream that he should take courage, adorn the city, and open the

gates; that the people should appear in white garments of peace, but that he and the priests should meet the strangers in the robes of their office. At length, at the head of a sumptuous train of generals and tributary princes, a young man of twenty-four, upon a beautiful steed, rode forward from the way going down to the sea to the spot which may still be seen, called, anciently, Scopus, the prospect, because from that point one approaching could behold, for the first time, Jerusalem crowned by the Temple rising fair upon the heights of Zion and Moriah.

The youth possessed a beauty of a type in those regions hitherto little known. As compared with the swarthy Syrians in his suite, his skin was white; his features were stamped with the impress of command, his eyes filled with an intellectual light. With perfect horsemanship he guided the motions of his charger. A fine grace marked his figure, set off with a cloak, helmet, and gleaming

arms, as he expressed with animated gestures his exultation over the spectacle before him. But now down from the heights came the procession of the priests and the people. The multitude proceeded in their robes of white; the priests stood clothed in fine linen; while the high-priest, in attire of purple and scarlet, upon his breast the great breastplate of judgment with its jewels, upon his head the mitre marked with the plate of gold whereon was engraved the name of God, led the train with venerable dignity.

Now, says the historian, when the Phoenicians and Chaldeans that followed Alexander thought that they should have liberty to plunder the city, and torment the high-priest to death, the very reverse happened; for the young leader, when he saw the multitude in the distance, and the figure of the high-priest before, approached him by himself, saluted him, and adored the name, which was graven upon the plate of the mitre. Then

a captain, named Parmenio, asked him how it came to pass that, when all others adored him, he should adore the high-priest of the Jews. To whom the leader replied: "I do not adore him, but that God who hath honored him with His high-priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and could give me the dominion over the Persians." Then, when Alexander had given the high-priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city, and he offered sacrifice to God in the Temple, according to the high-priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high-priest and the priests. He granted all the multitude desired; and when he said to them that if any of them would enlist themselves in his army on this condition, that they

should continue under the laws of their fore-fathers, he was willing to take them with him, many were ready to accompany him in his wars.

When the high-priest Jaddua and Alexander the Great went hand in hand up into the mount of the Temple, then for the first time came together the Jew and the Aryan.

It was a contact taking place under circumstances, it would seem, the most auspicious—the venerable old man and the beautiful Greek youth clasping hands, the ruthless followers of the conqueror baffled in their hopes of booty, the multitudes of Jerusalem, in their robes of peace, filling the air with acclamations, as Alexander rode from the place of prospect up the heights of Zion, into the solemn precincts of the Temple. It was the prologue, however, to a tragedy of the darkest, to a persecution of two thousand years, the flames of which even at the present hour can scarcely be said to have died down.

Alexander at the Gates of Paradise

A LEGEND FROM THE TALMUD

BY RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

FIERCE was the glare of Cashmere's middle day,

When Alexander, for Hydaspes bent,
Through trackless wilds urged his impetuous way:

Who yet in that wide, wasteful continent,

A little valley found, so calm, so sweet,
He there awhile to tarry was content.

A crystal stream was murmuring at his feet,

Whereof the monarch, when his meal was done,
Took a long draught, to slake his fever heat.

Again he drank, and yet again, as one

Who would have drained that fountain crystal-line

Of all its waves, and left it dry anon :

For in his veins, oftentimes afire with wine,
And in his bosom, throne of sleepless pride,
The while he drank, went circling peace divine.

It seemed as though all evil passions died
Within him, slaked was every fire accurst;
So that in rapturous joy aloud he cried:—

“ Oh, might I find where these pure waters first
Shoot sparkling from their living fountain-
head—

Oh, there to quench my spirit’s inmost thirst!

“ Sure if we followed where these waters led,
We should at length some fairer region gain
Than yet has quaked beneath our iron tread,—

“ Some land that should in very truth contain
Whate’er we dream of, beautiful and bright,
And idly dreaming of, pursue in vain!

“That land must stoop beneath our conquering might.

Companions dear, this toil remains alone,
To win that region of unmatched delight.

“O faithful in a thousand labors known,
One toil remains, the noblest and the last ;
Let us arise, and make that land our own !”

—Through realms of darkness, wildernesses vast,
All populous with sights and sounds of fear,
In heat and cold, by day and night, he past—

With trumpet-clang, with banner, and with spear ;
Yearning to drink that river, where it sent
Its first pure waters forth, serene and clear :

Till boldest captains sank, their courage spent,
And dying cried, “This stream all search defies !”

But never would he tarry nor repent—

Nor pitched his banners, till before his eyes
Rose high as heaven, in its secluded state,
The mighty, verdant wall of Paradise.

And lo ! that stream, which early still and late
He had tracked upward, issued bright and clear
From underneath the angel-guarded gate.

—“ And who art thou that hast adventured here,
Daring to startle this serene abode
With flash of mortal weapons, sword and spear ? ”

So the angelic sentinel of God,
Fire-flashing, to the bold invader cried,
Whose feet profane those holy precincts trod.

The son of Philip without dread replied :—
“ Is Alexander’s fame unknown to thee,
Which the world knows—mine, who have victory
tied

“ To my sword’s hilt, and who, while stoop to me
All other lands, would win what rich or fair
This land contains, and have it mine in fee ? ”

—“ Thou dost thyself proclaim that part or share
Thou hast not here. O man of blood and sin,
Go back !—with those blood-stained hands despair

“ This place of love and holy peace to win :
This is the gate of righteousness, and they,
The righteous, only here may enter in.”

Around, before him, lightnings dart and play :
He undismayed—“ Of travail long and hard
At least some trophy let me bear away.”

—“ Lo ! then this skull—which, if thou wilt re-
gard,
And to my question seek the fit reply,
All thy long labors shall have full reward.

“Once in that hollow circle lodged an eye,
That was, like thine, forever coveting—
Which worlds on worlds had failed to satisfy.

“Now, while thou gazest on that ghastly ring,
From whence of old a greedy eye outspied,
Say thou what was it—for there was a thing—

“Which filled at last and thoroughly satisfied
The eye that in that hollow circle dwelt,
So that, ‘Enough, I have enough,’ it cried.”

—Blank disappointment at the gift he felt,
And, hardly taking, turned in scorn away;
Nor he the riddle of the angel spelt—

But cried unto his captains: “We delay,
And at these portals lose our time in vain,
By more than mortal terrors kept at bay:

“ Come—other lands as goodly spoils contain;
Come—all too long untouched the Indian gold,
The pearls and spice of Araby remain!—

“ Come, and who will this riddle may unfold.”
Then stood before him, careless of his ire,
An Indian sage, who rendered answer bold:—

“ Lord of the world, commanded to inquire
What was it that could satisfy an eye,
That organ of man’s measureless desire—

“ By deed and word thou plainly dost reply,
That its desire can nothing tame or quell,
That it can never know sufficiency.

“ While thou enlargest thy desire as hell,
Filling thy hand, but filling not thy lust,
Thou dost proclaim man’s eye insatiable:

“ Such answer from thy lips were only just.
Yet 'twas not so. One came at last, who threw
Into yon face an heap of vilest dust—

“ Whereof a few small grains did fall into
And filled the orb and hollow of that eye;
When that which suffisance not ever knew
Before, was fain, ‘ I have enough,’ to cry.”

The Banished Kings

A TALMUDIC ALLEGORY

BY RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

ON a fair ship, borne swiftly o'er the deep,
A man was lying, wrapt in dreamless sleep:
When unawares upon a sunken rock
That vessel struck, and shattered with the shock.
But strange! the plank where lay the sleeper bore
Him, wrapt in deep sleep ever, to the shore:
It bore him safely through the foam and spray,
High up on land, where couched 'mid flowers he
lay.

Sweet tones first woke him from his sleep, when
round
His couch observant multitudes he found:
All hailed him then, and did before him bow,
And with one voice exclaimed,—‘Our king art
thou.’

With jubilant applause they bore him on,
And set him wondering on a royal throne:
And some his limbs with royal robes arrayed,
And some before him duteous homage paid,
And some brought gifts, all rare and costly things,
Nature's and Art's profusest offerings:
Around him counsellors and servants prest.
All eager to accomplish his behest.
Wish unaccomplished of his soul was none;
The thing that he commanded, it was done.

Much he rejoiced, and he had well-nigh now
Forgotten whence he hither came, and how;
Until at eve, of homage weary grown,
He craved a season to be left alone.
Alone in hall magnificent he sate,
And mused upon the wonder of his fate;
When lo! an aged counsellor, a seer,
Before unnoticed, to the king drew near;

—‘ And thee would I too gratulate, my son,
Who hast thy reign in happy hour begun :
Seen hast thou the beginning,—yet attend,
While I shall also show to thee the end.
That this new fortune do not blind thee quite,
Both sides regard, the darker with the bright :
Heed what so many who have ruled before,
Failing to heed, now rue for evermore.
Though sure thy state and strong thy throne
 appear,
King only art thou for a season here ;
A time is fixed, albeit unknown to thee,
Which when it comes, thou banished hence shalt
 be.
Round this fair spot, though hidden from the eye
By mist and vapor, many islands lie :
Bare are their coasts, and dreary and forlorn,
And unto them the banished kings are borne ;
On each of these an exiled king doth mourn.

For when a new king comes, they bear away
The old, whom now no vassals more obey ;
Stripped of his royalties and glories lent,
Unhonored and unintended he is sent
Unto his dreary island banishment ;
While all who girt his throne with service true,
Now fall away from him, to serve the new.
What I have told thee, lay betimes to heart,
And ere thy rule is ended, take thy part,
That thou hereafter on thine isle forlorn
Do not thy vanished kingdom vainly mourn,
When nothing of its pomp to thee remains
On that bare shore, save only memory's pains.

‘ Much, O my Prince ! my words have thee dis-
trest,
Thy head has sunk in sorrow on thy breast ;
Yet idle sorrow helps not—I will show
A wiser way, which shall true help bestow.

This counsel take—to others given in vain,
While no belief from them my words might gain.
Know then, whilst thou art monarch here, there
stand

Helps for the future many at command ;
Then, while thou canst, employ them to adorn
That island whither thou must once be borne.
Unbuilt and waste and barren now that strand,
There gush no fountains from the thirsty sand,
No groves of palm-trees have been planted there,
Nor plants of odorous scent perfume that air ;
While all alike have shunned to contemplate
That they should ever change their flattering
state.

But make thou there provision of delight,
Till that which now so threatens, may invite ;
Bid there thy servants build up royal towers,
And change its barren sands to leafy bowers ;
Bid fountains there be hewn, and cause to bloom
Immortal amaranths, shedding rich perfume.

So when the world, which speaks thee now so fair
And flatters so, again shall strip thee bare,
And drive thee naked forth in harshest wise,
Thou joyfully wilt seek thy paradise.

There will not vex thee memories of the past,
While hope will heighten here the joys thou hast.
This do, while yet the power is in thine hand,
While thou hast helps so many at command.'

Then raised the prince his head with courage
new,
And what the sage advised, prepared to do.
He ruled his realm with meekness, and mean-
while
He marvellously decked the chosen isle;
Bade there his servants build up royal towers,
And change its barren sands to leafy bowers;
Bade fountains there be hewn, and caused to
bloom
Immortal amaranths, shedding rich perfume.

And when he long enough had kept his throne,
To him sweet odors from that isle were blown;
Then knew he that its gardens blooming were,
And all the yearnings of his soul were there.
Grief was it not to him, but joy, when they
His crown and sceptre bade him quit one day;
When him his servants rudely did dismiss,
'Twas not the sentence of his ended bliss,
But pomp and power he cheerfully forsook,
And to his isle a willing journey took,
And found diviner pleasure on that shore,
Than all his proudest state had known before.

The Lent Jewels

A JEWISH APOLOGUE

BY RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

IN schools of wisdom all the day was spent:
His steps at eve the Rabbi homeward bent,
With homeward thoughts, which dwelt upon the
wife

And two fair children who consoled his life.
She, meeting at the threshold, led him in,
And with these words preventing, did begin:
‘I, greeting ever your desired return,
Yet greet it most to-day; for since this morn
I have been much perplexed and sorely tried
Upon one point, which you shall now decide.
Some years ago, a friend into my care
Some jewels gave, rich, precious gems they were;
But having given them in my charge, this friend
Did afterward nor come for them, nor send,

But in my keeping suffered them so long,
That now it almost seems to me a wrong
That he should suddenly arrive to-day,
To take those jewels, which he left, away.
What think you? Shall I freely yield them back,
And with no murmuring? so henceforth to lack
Those gems myself, which I had learned to see
Almost as mine for ever, mine in fee?'

'What question can be here? your own true heart
Must needs advise you of the only part;
That may be claimed again which was but lent,
And should be yielded with no discontent;
Nor surely can we find in this a wrong,
That it was left us to enjoy it long.'

'Good is the word,' she answered; 'may we now
And evermore that it is good allow!'

And, rising, to an inner chamber led,
And there she showed him, stretched upon one
bed,

Two children pale, and he the jewels knew,
Which God had lent him, and resumed anew.

The Fox and the Fish

BY HYMAN HURWITZ

(From *Hebrew Tales*)

IT was the lot of Rabbi Akiba to live in most calamitous times. Jerusalem was in ruins; the flower of the nation had either perished during the war, or had been carried in captivity to grace the triumph of the conqueror; and the miserable remnant that was permitted to remain in their once happy, but then desolated country, groaned under the iron yoke of the Romans; who, attributing the heroic resistance which the people had made to their arms, and the obstinacy with which they had defended their country to the spirit of their religion, wished totally to abolish it; and with this view forbade them its free exercise, and the study of the law. Akiba observed the deplorable condition of his brethren; and fearing lest the

knowledge of the law should be totally lost, ventured, notwithstanding the Roman decrees, to instruct the people in their religious duties, and to teach the law publicly. One day as he was thus laudably engaged, Pappus, the son of Judah, a man well known for his learning, represented to him the imprudence of thus acting contrary to the Roman edicts; and said to him, "Akiba, art thou not afraid of this nation?" (alluding to the Romans) thus wishing to deter him from so dangerous an employment, by intimating that there are times when prudence requires us to yield to circumstances. Akiba, whose opinion was, that no circumstances whatever can justify an Israelite to forsake his religion, being also persuaded that the calamities which the nation then experienced were to be attributed to their iniquities, and that their only chance of deliverance was in strictly adhering to the laws of God, said to him, "Pappus, art thou the man of whom it is said, he is wise?

surely, thy words show that thou art a fool ; " and in order to expose to his audience the folly of that policy, commonly called expedience, which often sacrifices permanent good to momentary advantages, he told them the following fable :

The fox, said he, once took a walk by the side of a river, and observed the fish hurrying to and fro in the greatest agitation and alarm. Curious to know the cause of so much confusion, he addressed himself to them, and said, " Friends, may I be so bold as to ask why you are so much agitated ? " " We are endeavoring," replied the fish " to flee from our enemies, and avoid the many nets and snares which they have prepared for us." " Oh ! oh ! " said the cunning fox, " if that be all, I can tell you an easy way how to secure your safety. Come along with me on dry land, where we may dwell together in tranquillity, in the same manner as our ancestors did before us." The fish, perceiving the treachery of their insidious

adviser, said to him, "Fox! fox! art thou he who is considered as the most sagacious of animals? Surely, thy counsel proves thee a very great fool. If even in our own native element we are beset with so many dangers, what security can we hope to find on an element so repugnant to our nature, and so contrary to our habits?"

"It is even so with us," continued the pious Rabbi; "if, even by partially following the law of which it is said, 'It is thy life and length of days,' we experience so much distress and oppression, what think you will be our lot should we entirely abandon it?"

The Sleep of Rabbi Choni

A TALMUDIC LEGEND

BY EMMA LEIGH

“WITH what art thou busying thyself?” asked Rabbi Choni of an old man planting by the road-side.

“I am planting a carob-tree, my master.”

“A carob-tree!” echoed Choni. “What folly is this? Dost thou not know that a full generation must pass ere this tree beareth fruit? Neither thy lips nor those of thy son will taste of it.”

“Thou speakest truth, my master. Yet when I think with what pleasure I ate the fruit of my grandsire’s toil, I would that my son’s sons have like delight.”

Then Choni went on, feeling strangely rebuked by the old man’s words. Unwonted fatigue came upon him.

In a shady nook he sought rest. Sweet sleep seized his tired limbs. Round about him sprang up a hedge. It as suddenly disappeared ere sleep released her captive.

When the Rabbi sat down to rest, the sun was declining toward his bed in the sea. When the Rabbi awoke, the sun was mounting toward the height of another day.

Conscience-stricken at his sloth, Choni started homeward. His limbs refused to keep pace with his desire, and he made but little speed. When he reached the spot where, on the previous day, he had left the old man, before him was a leafy carob-tree on whose branches the pods seemed ready to open. Scarce believing his eyes, Choni turned to a boy looking longingly at the fruit.

“Whose hand planted this tree, my boy?”

“My grandsire’s, the day before his death.”

Choni turned away bewildered. Was he dreaming? In his perplexity the hand of the Rabbi in-

stinctively sought his beard. How long it had grown overnight!

Dazed he wended his homeward way through unfamiliar paths, past strange faces. Suddenly he stopped. Of a truth his was a dream. This was the well-known house of his son where he was ever welcome.

With an almost light step he entered. Then his eyes fell on a young mother playing with a babe crowing from its father's arms. The faces were not those he had expected to see. Struck dumb, Choni paused on the threshold. Then finding voice, he said, "I pray thee pardon, I mistook this house for that of Choni's son."

"Choni's son!" exclaimed the man of the house. "Dost thou not know that my father, on whom be peace, is dead these ten years?"

"Thy father dead!"

Seeing the stricken face of his visitor, the younger man asked compassionately, "Art thou

my father's friend? An it be so, then thou art indeed welcome."

Passing a hand over his puzzled brow, "I—I am thy father's—I am—I am Choni," he stammered in a voice but half heard.

"Choni! Dost mean Rabbi Choni? Full seventy years have passed over his grave."

"His grave! Where lies it?"

Filled with pity for the white face before him, Choni's grandson said, "Seventy years ago to-day my honored grandsire took his wonted walk through the country. So used was he to stay unmindful of the time, lost in pious musings, that his absence caused no anxiety. When a full three days had passed, people began to have misgivings, and his son and pupils went in search of him. No trace rewarded their eyes. The unwelcome thought forced itself upon them that he had fallen a prey to wild beasts."

"Choni is not dead. I, I am Choni. Choni is

not dead," sobbed the Rabbi, and he staggered toward the speaker.

Quickly giving his precious burden to his wife, the young man caught the falling form, and gently led Choni into an adjoining room.

That some grief had affected the stranger's mind, he did not doubt. That it was his duty to care for the old man, he well knew. He did not shirk. So Choni lived a stranger, kindly tended, at his grandson's hearth.

His heart was heavy, and his strength waned day by day, till at last God heard Choni's prayer, and sent him everlasting sleep.

Through Darkness

BY RICHARD HENRY STODDARD

ONE night the Angel Gabriel,
Seated in Paradise apart,
Heard the low loving Voice of God
In answer to a human heart.

“Eminent must this servant be,
Who to the Most High is so nigh;
Whose spirit, dead to lust below,
Already is with Him on high.”

He hastened over land and sea
To find this man—he went like light;
But found him not, in earth or heaven,
Through all the watches of the night.

“ O Lord, direct me to this man,
That is so near and dear to Thee.”

“ The man thou speakest of, Gabriel,
Thou shalt in yon pagoda see.”

Straightway to the pagoda sped
The Instructed One, and, looking there,
Beheld before an idol grim
A solitary man in prayer.

“ Canst thou regard this man, O Lord,
Who to an idol prays, not Thee? ”

“ I have forgot his ignorance,
Since he through darkness hath found Me.”

The Vision of Rabbi Nathan

By FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE

THE creeping incense misted all the air
With spices, and the people bowed in prayer.
The Rabbi Nathan, kneeling in his place
(A prison'd angel looked out of his face),
As the slow shaken waves did lap and roll,
Felt a deep drowse fall muffling all his soul.
Thicker above him did its circles draw,
Until his spirit (for he slept not) saw
As one that stands upon the ocean bed
Sees thro' the glimmering greenness overhead
Wash'd weeds that fall and flicker on the eye,
And floating rocks and a faint wavering sky.
Then did the dimness furl away and pass
And his clear spirit was as burning brass,
And that invisible world that everywhere
Is poured around us like a finer air

Threw on its lucent face reflections true,
And to this shape the Rabbi's vision grew.
The time and place were such as they had been,
Nor any change had touched the very scene.
'Neath the white clouds of incense, slowly borne,
The congregation bow'd like rain-laid corn.
But lo! before the Rabbi's purgèd eyes
Their prayers as breath in frosty air did rise ;
Or as the soul from lips death leaves agape
Slips lightly forth, a motèd fluctuant shape.
Yea, and the air did vibrate, flash, and sing,
As when a snow of sea-birds, wing on wing,
Doth rise, and sweep, and blot the sun awhile,
From some gray, desolate, wave-wasted isle.
Past palmy pillar and thro' massy beam,
They soared and floated lightly as a dream.
But when they met the blue sky's archèd spring,
Even as a dove that drops with broken wing,
Lo, prayer on prayer did roll and shoot and fall,
Heaven's gate just touch'd, but enter'd not at all.

And Nathan gazing to this truth did win—
They might not pass because of fleshly sin
That clung and weigh'd them down.

Some prayers again
Up to the cedarn roof did scarce attain,
Then, beaten back, in wandering wreaths they
 went,
Creeping away as each might find a vent.
And of these thwarted prayers the greater part
Rose from a cumber'd, lucre-loving heart.
Yea, and some prayers drove back on them that
 spoke,
Blinding the eyes with bitter poisonous smoke,
Clogging the throat, and breeding sores within.
And Nathan knew the fierce and festering sin
That made these prayers to rankle in the soul,
A spreading foulness, not a making whole,
Was some old hatred, deep and black and fell,
Housed in the heart, and loved and tended well.

Yet, here and there, behold a prayer arose
And pierced the sky, and caught soft sun-shot
glows,
And, melting, broke in drops of healing dew;
And now from out the heart of Heaven there
drew
An arm, a glory, great and very bright,
That flash'd as some swift star that cleaves the
night,
And in a golden vial quaintly wrought
The dropping nardy dews this great arm caught.
Then, where the very Heavens shrank away,
From the dread splendor quick with fiery spray,
The burning void that God's own feet had made,
The arm stretch'd forth, and lo! the prayers were
laid.

Then Nathan fell and lay upon his face,
And spake not, thought not, stirr'd not from his
place,
But let his soul flow out upon the air
In ecstasy too deep for praise or prayer.

The Emperor and the Rabbi

BY GEORGE CROLY

“OLD Rabbi, what tales dost thou pour in
mine ear,
What visions of glory, what phantoms of fear,
Of a God, all the gods of the Roman above,
A mightier than Mars, a more ancient than Jove?

“Let me see but His splendors, I then shall be-
lieve.

’Tis the senses alone that can never deceive.
But show me your Idol, if earth be His shrine,
And your Israelite God shall, old dreamer, be
mine!”

It was Trajan that spoke, and the stoical sneer
Still played on his features sublime and severe,
For, round the wild world that stooped to his
throne,

He knew but one god, and himself was that one!

“The God of our forefathers,” low bowed the Seer,

“Is unseen by the eye, is unheard by the ear;
He is Spirit, and knows not the body’s dark chain;

Immortal His nature, eternal His reign.

“He is *seen* in His power, when the storm is abroad;

In His justice, when guilt by His thunders is awed;

In His mercy, when mountain and valley and plain

Rejoice in His sunshine, and smile in His rain.”

“Those are dreams,” said the monarch, “wild fancies of old;

But what God can I worship, when none I behold?

Can I kneel to the lightning, or bow to the wind?

Can I worship the shape, that but lives in the mind?"

"I shall show thee the herald He sends from His throne."

Through the halls of the palace the Rabbi led on,
Till above them was spread but the sky's sapphire dome,

And, like surges of splendor, beneath them lay
Rome.

And towering o'er all, in the glow of the hour,
The Capitol shone, earth's high centre of power :
A thousand years glorious, yet still in its prime ;
A thousand years more, to be conquered of
Time.

But the West was now purple, the eve was begun ;

Like a monarch at rest, on the hills lay the sun ;
Above him the clouds their rich canopy rolled,
With pillars of diamond, and curtains of gold.

The Rabbi's proud gesture was turned to the
orb:

“O King! let that glory thy worship absorb!”

“What! worship that sun, and be blind by the
gaze?

No eye but the eagle's could look on that blaze.”

“Ho! Emperor of earth, if it dazzles thine eye
To look on that orb, as it sinks from the sky,”
Cried the Rabbi, “what mortal could dare but
to see

The Sovereign of him, and the Sovereign of
thee!”

The Four Misfortunes

A HEBREW TALE

BY JOHN GODFREY SAXE

A PIOUS Rabbi, forced by heathen hate
To quit the boundaries of his native land,
Wandered abroad, submissive to his fate,
Through pathless woods and wastes of burning
sand.

A patient ass, to bear him in his flight,
A dog, to guard him from the robber's stealth,
A lamp, by which to read the law at night,—
Was all the pilgrim's store of worldly wealth.

At set of sun he reached a little town,
And asked for shelter and a crumb of food;
But every face repelled him with a frown,
And so he sought a lodging in the wood.

“ ‘Tis very hard,” the weary traveller said,

“ And most inhospitable, I protest,
To send me fasting to this forest bed;

But God is good, and means it for the best!”

He lit his lamp to read the sacred law,

Before he spread his mantle for the night;
But the wind rising with a sudden flaw,

He read no more,—the gust put out the light.

“ ‘Tis strange,” he said, “ ‘tis very strange, indeed,

That ere I lay me down to take my rest,
A chapter of the law I may not read,—

But God is good, and all is for the best.”

With these consoling words the Rabbi tries

To sleep,—his head reposing on a log,—
But, ere he fairly shut his drowsy eyes,

A wolf came up and killed his faithful dog.

“ What new calamity is this ? ” he cried ;
“ My honest dog—a friend who stood the test
When others failed—lies murdered at my side !
Well,—God is good, and means it for the
best ! ”

Scarce had the Rabbi spoken, when, alas !—
As if at once to crown his wretched lot,
A hungry lion pounced upon the ass,
And killed the faithful donkey on the spot.

“ Alas !—alas ! ” the weeping Rabbi said,
“ Misfortune haunts me like a hateful guest ;
My dog is gone, and now my ass is dead,—
Well,—God is good, and all is for the best ! ”

At dawn of day, imploring heavenly grace,
Once more he sought the town ; but all in vain ;
A band of robbers had despoiled the place,
And all the churlish citizens were slain !

“ Now God be praised ! ” the grateful Rabbi cried,
“ If I had tarried in the town to rest,
I, too, with these poor villagers had died,—
Sure, God is good, and all is for the best !

“ Had not the saucy wind put out my lamp,
By which the sacred law I would have read,
The light had shown the robbers to my camp,
And here the villains would have left me dead !

“ Had not my faithful animals been slain,
Their noise, no doubt, had drawn the robbers
near,
And so their master, it is very plain,
Instead of them, had fallen murdered here !

“ Full well I see that this hath happened so
To put my faith and patience to the test ;
Thanks to His name ! for now I surely know
That God is good, and all is for the best ! ”

Rabbi Ishmael

BY JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

THE Rabbi Ishmael, with the woe and sin
Of the world heavy upon him, entering in
The Holy of Holies, saw an awful Face
With terrible splendor filling all the place.
“O Ishmael ben Elisha!” said a voice,
“What seekest thou? What blessing is thy
choice?”
And, knowing that he stood before the Lord,
Within the shadow of the cherubim,
Wide-winged between the blinding light and him,
He bowed himself, and uttered not a word,
But in the silence of his soul was prayer:
“O Thou Eternal! I am one of all,
And nothing ask that others may not share.
Thou art Almighty; we are weak and small,
And yet Thy children: let Thy mercy spare!”

Trembling, he raised his eyes, and in the place
Of the insufferable glory, lo! a face
Of more than mortal tenderness, that bent
Graciously down in token of assent,
And, smiling, vanished! With strange joy elate,
The wondering Rabbi sought the Temple's gate,
Radiant as Moses from the Mount he stood
And cried aloud unto the multitude:

“O Israel, hear! The Lord our God is good!
Mine eyes have seen His glory and His grace;
Beyond His judgments shall His love endure;
The mercy of the All-Merciful is sure!

The Two Friends

A RABBINICAL TALE

BY JOHN GODFREY SAXE

GOOD Rabbi Nathan had rejoiced to spend
A social se'nnight with his ancient friend,
The Rabbi Isaac. In devout accord
They read the Sacred Books, and praised the Lord
For all His mercies unto them and theirs;
Until, one day, remembering some affairs
That asked his instant presence, Nathan said,
" Too long, my friend (so close my soul is wed
To thy soul), has the silent lapse of days
Kept me thy guest; although with prayer and
praise
The hours were fragrant. Now the time has
come
When, all-reluctant, I must hasten home

To other duties than the dear delights
To which thy gracious friendship still invites.”
“ Well, be it so, if so it needs must be,”
The host made answer; “ be it far from me
To hinder thee in aught that Duty lays
Upon thy pious conscience. Go thy ways,
And take my blessing!—but, O friend of mine,
In His name whom thou servest, give me thine! ”
“ Already,” Nathan answered, “ had I sought
Some fitting words to bless thee; and I thought
About the palm-tree, giving fruit and shade;
And in my grateful heart, O friend, I prayed
That Heaven be pleased to make thee even so!
O idle benediction!—Well I know
Thou lackest nothing of all perfect fruit
Of generous souls, or pious deeds that suit
With pious worship. Well I know thine alms
In hospitable shade exceed the palm’s;
And, for rich fruitage, can that noble tree,
With all her opulence, compare with thee?

Since, then, O friend, I cannot wish thee more,
In thine own person, than thy present store
Of Heaven's best bounty, I will even pray
That, as the palm-tree, though it pass away,
By others, of its seed, is still replaced,
So thine own stock may evermore be graced
With happy sons and daughters, who shall be,
In wisdom, strength, and goodness, like to thee!"

The Lord Baltimore Press

THE FRIEDENWALD COMPANY

BALTIMORE, MD., U. S. A.